



MEMORANDUM

RE: The W.G. Pearson Center, Progress Updates
TO: Durham County Commissioners & Staff
FROM: Student U
DATE: October 27, 2017

Financing and Construction

In January 2017, Student U and Self-Help began meeting weekly with a team consisting of members from C.T. Wilson (General Contractor), DTW Architects, and several other subcontractors and vendors to start the planning process for the renovation of the W.G. Pearson Center (WGPC) at 600 E. Umstead St. This team was able to finalize pricing for the various parts of the needed renovation, including ADA code compliance adjustments, asbestos abatement, new roofing, new HVAC system, new flooring, new plumbing, new electrical wiring, and new windows throughout the building. The renovations also include slight floor plan adjustments and outdoor upgrades to meet organizational needs and to ensure the space can be maximally used. The total project cost, including acquisition of the building for \$1M, is \$10,925,393.

Throughout these months, Self-Help has been working through the process of obtaining Historic and New Markets tax credit investors as additional sources of equity (totaling over \$5M) and Student U has been raising funds for our own investment in the project (\$1.35M) to accompany the Durham County investment of \$4.25M to reach \$10.9M. In April 2017, Self-Help officially acquired WGPC from Durham Public Schools (DPS), although DPS personnel continued occupying the building until June when the 2016-17 school year ended. Construction plans were finalized and construction officially began on July 1, 2017, expected to finish in July 2018. Student U was originally planning to stay in the building throughout construction phased around our operations, but in May, final budget deliberations led us to vacate the building for this year to shorten the construction timeline, which saved approximately \$300,000 on the project.

As of October, demolition is almost fully complete and installations of new systems and walls are happening each week. Members of the Student U and Self-Help teams attend weekly construction meetings and building walk-throughs to hear updates and make decisions when needed with C.T. Wilson and DTW Architects.

Community Engagement Process

After the November 28th BOCC approval of the investment WGPC, our staff and Board began the process of creating the vision for the usage of the building. The W.G. Pearson Taskforce, composed of Board, community and staff members, was created to fulfill the requirement of our MOU that we engage with the community to articulate a *clear vision and plan for the utilization* of the space. To complete this work, we also hired BaD Arts Consulting, a black woman-owned consulting firm to lead our efforts to engage the appropriate stakeholders in the vision creation process. The taskforce engaged in discussions with the following constituents: students, parents, WGPC neighbors (residents, organizations, businesses), clergy, Student U Board Members, County Commissioners, School Board Members, and partner organizations.

Findings and Vision

Across stakeholders, consistent themes emerged about the usage of the building. We offer them here as pillars for the future vision of utilization of WGPC.*

- WGPC will remain a youth-centered space that houses activities and programs to enrich the lives and outcomes of young people.
- WGPC will be as accessible as possible to the surrounding community of neighbors and organizations.
- WGPC space and all tenants within will work together to have a greater impact on the surrounding

inspire create build achieve grow think dream empower lead experience invent play love imagine



neighborhood and greater Durham overall with the shared goal of improving educational outcomes for young people.

- The space and leasing model for WGPC will strive to make the building accessible to the most number people and to be financially sustainable.

Our Potential Partnerships:

In order to realize the full potential of WGPC, we believe we must build strong partnerships with community organizations, businesses, and government agencies to lead the programming within the space. To this point, the following organizations have expressed interest in renting space and/or partnering with Student U to provide programming out of WGPC:

1. Book Harvest
2. Boys & Girls Club
3. BUMP
4. Crayons 2 Calculators
5. DAM
6. Durham Academy
7. DPS Office of Equity Affairs
8. El Futuro
9. Hayti Heritage Center
10. Lincoln Community Health Center
11. Ministers and Friends of Hayti
12. My Brother's Keeper
13. North Carolina Central University
14. Village of Wisdom
15. Waypoint Church
16. YMCA

All decisions about partners sharing space in WGPC within the next seven years are subject to tax credit investor review and approval, based on the financing structure.

Next Steps

The next phase of our work is to transform this vision into a coherent operating model, articulate selection criteria for partners in the space, and create governing policies and protocols to ensure the building is well-managed and reaches its full potential. We intend to continue partnering with the community to ensure that their voices remain central to this process. Our timeline is to begin the process of courting tenants and partners by summer 2018, at the latest, for a full opening of the building in January 2019.

**Specific ideas for the implementation of each of these pillars were collected and will be used to transform this vision into a working plan. We are happy to share them, if requested.*